

Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

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Creating choices for elders and adults with disabilities in Seattle-King County

MONTHLY MEETING NOVEMBER 18, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT

CITY OF SEATTLE	KING COUNTY	UNITED WAY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thelma Coney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Yeager	<input type="checkbox"/> Midge Levy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joanne Brekke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Verhei	<input type="checkbox"/> Lorna Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam John	<input type="checkbox"/> John Holecek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thelma Pegues
<input type="checkbox"/> Alexandra Tu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Barnett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timmie Faghin, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Rasmussen	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Moreland
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Low, Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phil Pitruzzello
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Houston Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Michael Miller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Robert Gross	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant
<input type="checkbox"/> Candace Inagi	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant

Excused Absence Midge Levy, Alexandra Tu, John Holecek, Lorna Stone, Michael Miller

Guests Will Parry, Thelma Caplan, Robb Miller, Dr. Raleigh Bowden

ADS Staff Pamela Piering, Rosemary Cunningham, Margaret Casey, Linda Wells, Karen Winston, Marcy Kubbs, Jane Crum

United Way Staff

**King County
Staff**

MINUTES

Timmie Faghin, Chair convened the Advisory Council (AC) meeting at 12:05 p.m. and invited everyone attending to introduce themselves. While awaiting the arrival of the speakers, Timmie reminded members of the November 30th Mayor's Reception for Advisory Council Members that will be held from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at City Hall. She also congratulated John Barnett for being quoted in the November 2005 AARP Bulletin about his volunteer work with the Faith in Action Program that assists older adults with errands or household chores.

In association with the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County and sponsored by:



City of Seattle



King County

PROGRAM TOPIC: **END OF LIFE ISSUES**

Today's program featured two speakers who addressed end-of-life issues. They were Robb Miller, Executive Director of Compassion and Choices, and Dr. Raleigh Bowden, Co-Director of the African American Comfort Program. ADS staff, Karen Winston co-directs the program with Dr. Bowden.

Robb Miller, Executive Director of Compassion and Choices

Compassion and Choices was formed in the 1990's at the peak of the AIDS epidemic by a group of volunteer activists. In 2005 it merged with End of Life Choices. Compassion and Choices provides education, advocacy, counseling, consultation with caregivers, advanced planning and free case management services. The emotional support they provide helps ensure individuals' wishes are honored at the end of their lives. They support their right to excellent end-of-life care, effective pain and symptom management, and for terminally ill, competent adults, aid in dying to avoid intolerable suffering.

Mr. Miller reports there has been controversy around the issue of some individuals wanting to hasten the dying process. He reports however that of over 150 individuals their case managers have worked with, less than 10% have indicated a desire to hasten their death.

Compassion and Choices is not a fringe group. Seventy percent of Americans and 50% of physicians believe it is acceptable for a mentally competent, permanently disabled person to hasten his or her death. Compassion and Choices will support those individuals but does not break the law or provide medications. Occasionally however, their case managers are present when an individual decides to stop eating or drinking, or refuses dialysis. Their goal is to empower the individual and they believe individuals should have excellent palliative care and access to Hospice.

Another activity Compassion and Choices engages in is advocating for legislation focused on better end-of-life treatment. They have, for example, supported legislation around pain management. In California they filed a lawsuit under elder abuse laws against a physician who did not provide adequate pain medication to a man suffering from painful bone cancer. In a \$1.5 million judgment, the Court ruled in favor of Compassion with Choices, finding that it is elder abuse if you under treat an older person's pain.

Locally, Compassion and Choices created a Hospital Visit Authorization form, popular with those in unmarried relationships who may not be permitted to visit their loved ones in the hospital without having Durable Power of Attorney. Compassion and Choices is also supporting legislation that, if passed, will enable the Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLTS) form and Advanced Directives to be available in electronic format.

Dr. Raleigh Bowden, Co-Director of the Seattle African American Comfort Program, defines growing old as the final stage of development. She worked at Fred Hutchinson Cancer

Research Center for 15 years, retiring from academic medicine in 1998. After heading the cancer and inpatient hospice program at Providence, she began to work on end-of-life issues in the African American community. A 42 year-old woman who died of breast cancer wanted to empower others in making personal end-of-life choices and provided the money that supported the development of Seattle African American Comfort Program (SAACP). The funds enabled the program to run eight focus groups to gather the opinions of older adults in the African American community, African American physicians, clergy, nurses and African Americans living with HIV. Comments from the focus group led to the development of a plan which includes two primary elements:

- 1) Education about care that is available at end-of-life such as Hospice and Palliative Care
- 2) Assist African Americans in accessing end-of-life care that is respectful

Agencies are being interviewed and evaluated by the SAACP. The goal is to have a network of appropriate programs that are able to provide information and referral services to the African American community. Another goal is to provide training to clergy and non-physician healthcare providers so they are better able to serve African Americans. In their first year of non-profit status, the organization has a staff of seven volunteer board members.

This fall the SAACP held a “Hospice 101” workshop in Southeast Seattle, providing information about the myths and facts of Hospice. It educated individuals about the multi-disciplinary physical, emotional and spiritual support Hospice provides to patients and their families. They emphasized that Hospice assists with Palliative or “Comfort Care” adding to the quality of life. Patients involved in Hospice live longer, and if adequate treatment is provided for pain, more energy is available to go into the patient’s relationships. Hospice care is covered under most insurance policies and by Medicare. Further information is available at the Washington State Hospice and Palliative Care website at: www.wshpco.org.

Providing culturally respectful care is important, as the healthcare system in our country, designed by white men, doesn’t serve women and people of color well. Evidence of this can be seen in the high rates of disease among people of color including the high rates of HIV among African Americans. People of color routinely receive inferior care resulting from institutionalized racism.

Dr. Bowden described a random study of physician’s treatment recommendations for people of color conducted at a conference for cardiologists. Case histories were provided, with and without photographs of the patients, and treatment recommendations requested. Of physicians who received case histories with a photograph, only about 50% of them recommended an invasive, potentially curative cardiac procedure. African Americans have reason not to trust our healthcare system.

The Seattle African American Comfort Program strives to re-establish trust in healthcare services by making referrals to physicians and services that have been evaluated for their ability to provide culturally respectful care. Post-treatment surveys of the patient care will be conducted.

Dr. Bowden reports that only 10% of individuals die a sudden death. Eighty to ninety percent of individuals die because someone decides to withhold treatment. As a result it is important to provide your physician with Advanced Directives and the Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLTS) form so they know your wishes.

An invitation was extended to have Robb Miller and Dr. Bowden write an article for the Seniors Digest about end-of-life issues. The invitation was readily accepted.

BUSINESS MEETING

Action Taken: It was moved/seconded and passed that the September 9, 2005 minutes be approved.

COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

Seattle City Council

Tom Rasmussen reported items concerning Seniors related to the City's 2006 budget. They included:

- 1) During the City's budget process there were more highly organized, visible groups than Seniors. This made it hard for the City Council to be responsive to the needs of older adults. The voice of older adults needs to be strengthened. The Advisory Council in particular needs to work to strengthen its effectiveness as an advocacy organization.
- 2) Never-the-less, the City '06 budget did include increased funding for programs for older adults. They included:
 - \$75,000 for the 55 + Employment program at the MOSC
 - \$200,000 for a food delivery program
 - \$100,000 one-time-only funding for Senior Centers

There was considerable discussion about the additional funding for Senior Centers which was provided in response to a request from the Central Area Senior Center. Historically United Way provided funding for infrastructure for Senior Centers, and King County and the City provided program funding. With United Ways shift to funding outcomes, it now doesn't pay for infrastructure. Senior Services has dropped its support as an umbrella agency to some of the community's Senior Centers such as the Wallingford and Greenwood programs. Now, less than

50% of the community's Senior Centers are part of Senior Services. As a result, it is uncertain if these new City dollars will flow through Senior Services program. The City has no policy on Senior Centers and no clear criteria for supporting these programs. The City Council will as a result ask the Human Services Department for a planning process on this.

3) Funding for a new detective for Elder Abuse. Together with the one currently unfilled position, a total of two new detectives would be added to work on Elder Abuse issues.

4) The Health Care Advisory Ballot issue passed during the November election. The City Council will take the citizen's message about the need for universal health care to Washington D.C.

5) Though the Sponsors have already approved a .087% inflationary adjustment for subcontracting agencies for 2005 the Human Services Coalition requested the City provide a 2.5% increase. It was suggested that the Advisory Council invite the Human Services Coalition to a future meeting.

Sponsor's Meeting

Timmie Faghin reported the Sponsors had a long discussion about Medicaid Part D. John Barnett expressed frustration that King County has not yet appointed a liaison to the Advisory Council. Art Mussman, who John brought to the Advisory Council, was interviewed in March, 2005, but has yet to be appointed by King County.

Action Taken: It was moved / seconded and passed that the Advisory Council Chair send a letter requesting the King County Sponsor fill vacancies on the Advisory Council as soon as possible. A copy of the letter will go to King County Council members.

The Executive Committee will discuss the issue further.

Planning and Allocation Committee

Thelma Coney reported that David Jensen, Director of Adult Programs at the Seattle Parks Department presented information about their programs. The committee was interested in hearing the Parks Department perspective on how to promote civic and social engagement among older adults. Mr. Jensen works with 37 advisory councils related to the Community Centers where programs for older adults are offered. They offer an impressive array of programs but are limited by the hours community centers are open. About 2,000 individuals have been served through the recreations programs. Fifty-five percent of those are over the age of 50.

Outreach and Advocacy Committee / Health Care Task Force

Larry Verhei reported that the 26th Annual Legislative Reception for Persons with Disabilities hosted by the Washington State Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment will be held on January 18, 2006. The reception will be located on the 3rd floor of the Legislative Building on the State Capitol Campus in Olympia and will begin at 5:30 PM. On street parking is free after 5 pm.

Larry Verhei asked that the Advisory Committee write a letter in support of HR 414, federal hearing aid assistance legislation that would provide a federal tax credit of \$500 every 5 years. Congressman Jim McDermott is one of the co-sponsors of the legislation.

Action Taken: It was moved / seconded and passed that the Advisory Council write a letter in support of HR 414.

Linda Wells reported that on November 15th people started to sign-up for Medicare Part D. There are 40 insurance plans in Washington. Individuals do not have to sign up for one of the plans, however, there will be a penalty of 1% per month added to their premium if they don't sign up by May 16, 2006. For further information, she recommended one of the following:

- www.benefitscheckup.org/rx
- www.medicare.gov
- Senior Information and Assistance at: 1-888-435-3377

Communications Committee

Timmie Faghin reported the number of visits to the Seniors Digest website continues to rise. In January, 2005 for example there were 863 visits, but by October 2005 this number has climbed to 4,423 visits.

State Council on Aging

Joanne Brekke indicated there was no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee

Larry Verhei reported that the nominating committee proposed the following slate of officers for the Advisory Council for the coming year:

- Don Moreland, Chair
- Houston Brown, Vice-Chair
- Midge Levy, Secretary
- Thelma Pegues, Member-at-Large

Action Taken: It was moved/seconded and passed to cast a unanimous ballot for the proposed slate of officers.

Retreat Committee

Don Moreland reported that the committee has met twice and that Northshore Senior Center, the first choice for a site for the retreat, was unavailable on January 13, 2006, the date of the retreat. Don and Marcy toured Bastyr University which was an alternate site recommended by the committee and believe it will be a good location for the event. Larry Low and Larry Verhei will

organize a White Elephant gift exchange again this year and they ask that all Council members and staff that will be attending the retreat bring an item for the gift exchange. The next meeting of the Retreat Committee will be on Wednesday, November 30th at 10:30 am in the 10th Floor Conference Room.

Director's Report

Pamela Piering reported on a number of items to the Advisory Council.

- 1) The Statewide Gathering of Advisory Council and State Council members held on October 20th, was very successful. About 60 individuals attended, and response to the breakout groups on Legislative issues, Best Practices, and White House Conference on Aging was enthusiastic.
- 2) On October 21st, the Senior Lobby Conference was held in SeaTac. The topic of the conference was health care and the numerous speakers including Governor Gregoire and Senator Patty Murray spoke on various aspects of the challenge of reducing healthcare costs and providing healthcare coverage for all.
- 3) Pam thanked Helen Spencer and Martha Becker who recently resigned from the Advisory Council for their years of service on behalf of older adults and adults with disabilities. She showed those in attendance a certificate of appreciation that will be presented to Helen, and shared a quote by Herbert Hoover, reminiscent of Helen, "Words without actions are the assassins of idealism". She then presented Martha Becker with her certificate of appreciation for her service and quoted Eleanor Roosevelt who said, "People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously. This is how character is built."

Don Moreland shared that at the federal level, at 1:45 am, the House passed a Budget Reconciliation Bill that includes \$50 Billion in cuts to a variety of human service programs including Foodstamps and Medicaid.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

REGULAR JANUARY, 2006 MEETING CANCELED DUE TO ADVISORY COUNCIL RETREAT

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Friday, February 10, 2005

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

13th Floor Conference Room

Alaska Building

618 Second Ave, Seattle, WA 98104

www.adsadvisorycouncil.org

Larry Low, Secretary _____